

# Trends

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## JICA Scholars Attend Online JICA Joint Program 2020



From August 31 to September 2, 2020, the JICA Joint Program 2020 was held online for JICA scholarship program participants that arrived in Japan during 2019. The program aimed to boost their sense of purpose and stimulate networking. Around 200 participants, out of 305 current JICA scholars of various programs, gathered together - albeit virtually. It was the first event of

such kind. On August 31, JICA President Kitaoka Shinichi delivered a message on the subject of JICA's Challenges and Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Post-Corona Era.

First, President Kitaoka welcomed all the participants as members of the "JICA family" and emphasized the significance of studying abroad at a young age. He then spoke to broader issues, "JICA is taking a number of bold initiatives to turn the corona crisis into an opportunity. Among them, the key initiative is to establish resilient health systems in developing countries. Functional hospitals should be at the core of such a system. To achieve this goal, we would like to join forces with you." President Kitaoka further encouraged participants, saying, "As we continue to undergo this unprecedented situation, I urge all of you to envision what we can achieve together

during this turbulent time."

The session was followed by a presentation from two participants, and a Q&A session between the participants and President Kitaoka. The participants talked about the impact of the COVID-19 in their home countries, and talked positively about the prospect of working with many experts to come up with strategies to deal with the crisis.

It is hoped that the participants will play a leading role in their home countries, fostering cross-cultural understanding and furthering good relations with Japan. In conclusion, President Kitaoka said, "I believe that you are the link between your home countries and Japan, as well as the bridge to our future. JICA, with its vision of leading the world with trust, strongly believes that this bond is what is most needed at this unprecedented time."

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## ODA Loans to Boost Bangladesh



On August 12, JICA signed loan agreements with the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to provide Japanese ODA loans of up to a total of 338.247 billion yen. This latest series of loans covers seven projects that will enhance the development of Bangladesh's transport infrastructure,

economic growth, improvement of living conditions, urban environments and help create sustainable cities.

The projects detailed below cover a wide range of infrastructure and will benefit the entire country. The Jamuna Railway Bridge Construction Project will enhance logistics and rail passenger network capacity internally and with neighbouring countries. The Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Expansion Project (II), which includes constructing new terminals and other infrastructure to meet future demand for air transportation and to improve airport capacity. Two Mass Rapid Transit Development Projects in Dhaka will reduce traffic congestion, air pollution, and add a new line to increase coverage to more urban areas. The Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project will improve roads at congested town

areas along the National Highway 1, and increase economic growth by smoothing cargo flows between hubs. The Food Value Chain Improvement Project will enhance the food value chain in Bangladesh by providing concessional financing and technical assistance for agribusinesses and food processing industries. Finally, the Urban Development and City Governance Project plans to improve urban functioning by improving urban infrastructure and strengthening city governance related to infrastructure development in the target cities. Combined, these projects address multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals and will make a significant contribution towards Bangladesh's socioeconomic development.